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A MEDICAL MAN'S EXPERIENCES.

ALTHOUGH, in the eyes of the world, I may seem to be middle-aged, and of limited income; to have a tendency to baldness, and to possess a profusion of small children; to be in a state unprosperous and unpromising in a very high degree—I am still, in the opinion of the faculty, a rising young man with very excellent prospects. In the medical profession, no man is old until he is superannuated, and Hope—by means, as it would appear, of some curious chemical preparation—is made to flourish as an evergreen, whether it ever bear fruit or not. Let the weather be ever so favourably unhealthy, let the street-accidents be ever so interestingly serious, no case ever comes to my door—that is to say, no case with anything in it. There are, of course, however, candidates for my gratuitous attentions, enough and to spare. And here are three of my best patients, selected out of a ten years' diary.

Case I.—A. B. Female. Age 49. Profession, sick-nurse. Habit, plethoric. A. B. came upon my hands not at all before it was necessary. She had been seriously ill—the effect of years of indulgence in spirituous liquors—for weeks, and during that time she had been taking hairs of the dog that had bitten her, by way of cure. When I told her, as I felt it my duty to tell her, of her immediate danger, and of the almost certain result of her complaint, she was exceedingly affected and alarmed. Used as she had been to contemplate death in all its phases when it occurred to other persons, she was terrified to the last degree at its approaching herself. She shuddered to think of that cold shadow creeping over her, which she had often watched, unfeelingly enough, and even with impatience, darken the features of her fellow-beings, when its delay chanced to interrupt some trifling scheme of business or pleasure of her own. Her countenance, with the exception of her nose, whose colour circumstances had long rendered quite independent of the action of her feelings, blanched at the few serious sentences which I addressed to her, as though they had been veritable thrusts from the javelin of the grisly King. Her respectable, I might almost write her colossal legs, trembled beneath her while she listened. It was evident that A. B. had some very particular reasons of her own for living a little longer. This feeling, as far as my experience goes, is not peculiar to A. B., but the intensity of it was. Horror at the thought of dissolution is seldom exhibited, if even felt by this class of persons; abject fear such as hers could, I knew, be scarcely the consequence of other than

deep-dyed guilt. I was not much surprised when I was sent for to her lodgings for the second time upon that same night. She had been revolving in her mind what I had said to her, and it had disturbed her greatly. She felt more unhopeful than in the morning, and thought herself sinking. 'The worst,' as the nurse in attendance upon her rather unpleasantly remarked, upon my entrance, 'had come to the worst,' and I was required, she hinted, less as a doctor than as a father-confessor.

'Send that woman away,' said the patient in a hoarse whisper, and pointing to the attendant; 'all nusses is bad uns. I was a nuss myself.'

I motioned the obnoxious witness out of the room.

'I'm dying, doctor; I feel it. You're sure I am dying, ain't you?' interrupted she, changing her solemn tones for very shrill ones, and suffering her mask of forced repentance to drop momentarily aside, and disclose an expression of suspicious cunning—'you're quite sure?'

'We are sure of nothing,' said I gravely: 'you are very seriously ill.'

'I know,' exclaimed she bitterly, relapsing into her melancholy phase again; 'that is what all you doctors say; but it means death. O, sir, I have been a very, very wicked woman indeed. I have something—I have three things on my mind, which it will do me good, I think, to get disburdened of: they will kill me else, I feel, of their own selves. And, sir, I have not got a soul in the world to tell them to, only you.'

So this dreadful old person had indeed dragged me out of my warm bed for the purpose of reposing in me a dangerous confidence, which my own good-nature invited. I should like to have seen A. B. venturing to make a confidant of Dr Cressus in the next street after this same fashion. But it was just like my luck.

'Do you remember the very stout gentleman, doctor—him with the applepox in Ward No. 2—at St Barnabasses?'

'446. Pleurisy. Left convalescent?' inquired I, from memory.

'The same, sir. I bled him to death, doctor, at his own house within the week. His friends paid me by the job, you see, and I was overanxious to get it over.'

'Good heavens!' cried I; 'and to save yourself a little trouble, you committed, then, a cruel murder?'

'He went off like a lamb,' cried the wretched creature apologetically. 'But there's worse than that. I once gave a young gent. four doses of laudanum in one, and you wouldn't a known when he was dead from when he slept. But them was murders for all that, I know.'

'They certainly were, miserable woman,' cried I indignantly. 'Have you anything yet more upon your mind?'

'Hush!' whispered she, pointing towards the door; 'she's listening; they always does it, bless you—I knows 'em so well. Once—only once, as I'm a sinful woman—I smothered a sick man with his pillow; that was for his money; he would have died any way, because he had the lock-jaw. Now,' added she, with a long-drawn sigh, and after a pause, 'I feel somehow better and more comfortable like, thanks to you, sir.'

The patient had sunk back from her sitting-posture, as if exhausted with this terrible narration; but I read in her yet anxious eyes that she had still something more to say. Presently she again broke silence, and this time the emphasis with which she spoke was mingled with a tone of gratitude. She desired to recompense me, I suppose, for my prompt attention and interest, and delivered herself of this advice instead of a fee:

'When your time comes, doctor, and your friends send for the nuss, *don't let them pay her by the job.*'

The revelation of these crimes, which had been, without doubt, in reality committed, filled me with horror; and the reflection that she who had executed them would, in a few days at furthest, be out of the world, and no longer harmful, alone comforted me. My feelings, therefore, may be imagined by the sensitive, when, upwards of a fortnight after I had received the above confession, A. B., whom I had supposed to be far 'otherwhere,' as the poets say, called one morning at my private residence, in tolerable health, and also slightly in liquor. She had been priming herself to act rather a difficult part.

'I am come,' said she, 'to thank you, doctor, for your care and trouble about me when I was ill. I was very ill indeed, was I not, doctor?'

'You thought you were going to die,' remarked I with meaning.

'Yes,' answered she ingenuously, and without heeding the slight discrepancy between her two statements, 'and that is what I am come about to you, doctor. You knows as well as me what a parcel of nonsense folks do talk when they are delirious, and thinks they are in particular notice. [I afterwards discovered this expression to be A. B.'s rendering of the phrase *in articulo mortis*.] You must not be hard upon what a party says who has got the trembles. You must let bygones be bygones, doctor.'

I don't know whether it was weak of me, or whether it was strong-minded—whether I thought a confession upon a death-bed ought to be sacred, or whether it was to save myself trouble; but I let the old woman go, with a caution to the effect that she had better not let me hear of her attending any sick folks in future, which she took in exceedingly good part.

Case II.—I became acquainted with H. M. in the wards of St Barnabas, a young man who was by profession a prize-fighter, and who had come into the hospital with a dislocated knee, the consequence of kicking, violently and without due calculation of distance, at a personal friend with whom he had had a disagreement at a public-house. His habits had been very much the reverse of temperate, and the case which at first seemed simple enough, soon assumed a serious aspect: after many weeks of almost incessant suffering, it became necessary that the poor fellow should lose his leg by amputation, if he would preserve his life. The lopping of this limb was to him an especial grief, inasmuch as, next to the loss of one of his 'mauleys,' it was the saddest thing that, to one of his calling, could possibly happen. His occupation as 'a favourite of the public,' 'a pet of the fancy,' would, of course, be gone for ever, and

no other line was open to him, since the talents of a prize-fighter, however rare and valuable in themselves, so far from being of universal application, are an absolute hindrance to success in almost every other walk of life. There was, indeed, about as bad a look-out for poor H. M., when he was carried into St Barnabas' theatre to be acted upon, one April morning, as can be conceived. Still, the brave young fellow never winced or grumbled; he made his bow to the great semicircle of students—the rows of unfamiliar faces reaching from floor to roof—as though they were his ancient patrons of the ring. There was no chloroform in those days; but he looked on at all the proceedings which concerned him without one twitch of the mouth or knitting of the brows; and when the thing was over, and that limb, which he had been so long accustomed to consider his own, became the property of the scientific gentlemen around him, he said: 'I thank you, gentlemen,' in a cheery voice, and wished them joy of their acquisition.

I confess that, in spite of his disrespectful calling, I had a sincere liking for H. M., and pity for his misfortune; and as one of the dressers in his ward at that time, I had opportunities of doing him, occasionally, a little kindness, and speaking an encouraging word. We struck up quite a friendship, founded upon the basis of mutual respect, but, I feel bound to admit, without any great mixture of sentiment. He confided to me several particulars concerning the fancy and its patrons, which are not generally known, but which the same honourable feelings that kept me silent with regard to the delinquencies of A. B., prevent me from here disclosing. When the day came for the young prize-fighter to depart—with the exception of his left leg—from St Barnabas, he addressed me in these terms:

'Doctor, you have been a regular stunner to me all along since I have been here, and no mistake; I should be sorry to leave this here hospital without letting you know what I think about it. Most like, you imagined that a poor chap such as me had nothing to give you in return—which only makes it the more bricish—but I am not so bad off as I seem, doctor, by no manner of means.'

This was exceedingly gratifying to me, and even very exciting. I was trying to recall to my mind some of those instances which I had heard or read of concerning millionaires in the guise of scavengers, angels under the earthly form of crossing-sweepers, who have been, as Mr Lamb says, 'entertained unawares' by benevolent surgeons and others, and pondering whether H. M.'s fortune was more likely to be in the funds or in railway-shares, when that grateful young man resumed as follows:

'Here,' cried he, drawing a coin or medal, wrapped up in whity-brown paper, from his breast-pocket—'here is, if not money, at least money's worth: to one in your station and with your opportunities, sir, a matter of—ah—a pound a week for life, at the very least. Even in my humble walk, it has been a pretty penny to me already.'

'Why, my good man,' cried I, in unaffected disappointment at the discovery, 'this is only a half-penny!'

'Only a half-penny!' repeated H. M. with a delighted chuckle, as he hobbled away on his crutches in order to preclude any thanks for his generous behaviour. 'That's what you'll be trying to persuade other folks to believe before the day's out. It is only a half-penny; but it is a half-penny with a couple of tails upon it!'

H. M. opined—so little does one-half of the world guess how the other half lives—that the respectable profession of medicine demeaned itself like his own by the practice of tossing for half-crowns; and, seriously, if things continue as they are much longer

with me, I think I shall try my luck with that headless half-penny, the only pecuniary fee I have ever received.

Case III.—Once—and that day will not easily be forgotten—I was sent for to attend a lady at a fashionable hotel, and that lady a member of the aristocracy. She was a woman of strong force of will, and had made a point of having the nearest doctor summoned, or else they would have sent for Dr Cæsus to a moral certainty. For my part, I wish from the bottom of my heart—but I am anticipating.

The Lady Letitia Beebonnet was Scotch, and 'a wee bit crackit.' She was violent and impetuous upon all subjects—'a monomaniac,' as was said of a greater lady, 'about everything;' but inflexibility of purpose and contempt for conventional practices and opinions were her *forte*. Her present idea was, that so long as she chose to remain in any hotel, no matter for what term of months or years, she never need settle the bill till she went away. She had come to the *Fleur de Lis* without any intention of staying beyond ten days or so; but as her ladyship's account had been sent in somewhat peremptorily at the week's end, she was now staying on, out of spite, and for the express purpose of declining to settle it. Under ordinary circumstances, a person of Lady Letitia's rank might of course have resided in an inn for half her natural life without being troubled by the host; but in this particular case, the hotel belonged to a company, whose accounts were audited every week, and to whom the manager was responsible. He also, plebeian though he was, had that quality in superabundance upon which her ladyship so justly prided herself—pigheadedness. Upon the reiterated refusal of his aristocratic lodger to loosen her purse-strings, he had given to her some pieces of his mind which were not only unpalatable, but had disagreed with her to the extent of sending her to her bed; she was ill, and very ill, absolutely through sheer rage and obstinacy, and threatened to become worse with opposition. The manager had sworn that, upon the morrow, which was the end of her third week's sojourn with him, the Lady Letitia Beebonnet should settle her bill or leave the house; and her ladyship prepared for battle by sending for the nearest doctor.

I gathered these particulars from herself at the first interview, narrated with a garrulity such as I never heard equalled, and with an amount of accompanying action such as I had only seen examples of in establishments devoted to the insane.

'What I stand for,' concluded she, with vehemence, 'is the law—the law. I have plenty of money, hundreds of pounds, in that dressing-case yonder, but he shall never have one farthing of it upon compulsion, nor until I choose.'

As soon as I had recovered her ladyship out of the hysterics into which she had gradually worked herself during this recital, I took my leave. On my arrival the next afternoon, I found that the exasperated manager had refused to let her ladyship's bell be answered, or to supply her with food.

She had comforted herself for some time by pulling at the rope at her bedside, under the idea that she was at least creating a disturbance, although nobody came; but the domestics had placed a worsted stocking over the clapper. She was very unwell, indeed, by this time, and her complaint was not improved by the fact of her having had nothing to eat since the preceding afternoon; but she was considerably more obstinate than before, and quite prepared to starve rather than surrender what she imagined to be her legal rights.

Upon my remonstrating with the manager, he protested that she might starve, and welcome, but that he would put up with her nonsense, and be accountable for her expenses to the company, not an

hour longer. The company was of more consequence to him, he irreverently observed, than all the Beebonnets over the border.

'But,' urged I, 'if the Lady Letitia dies in your hotel, it will hurt the company seriously; and she will die, if she does not have sustenance shortly.'

Upon that view of the matter, some very weak gruel—with a cinder or two accidentally dropped into it—and a few slices of burned toast, were sent up to her ladyship's room.

The next day, I found my noble patient much better; invigorated by her food, but especially invigorated by her victory in having obtained it, and by an unlooked-for success of another kind. She had detected, as she lay in her bed, with nothing to do except to watch, like Robert the Bruce, the spiderwebs that began to adorn the cornices, a second bell-wire running round her apartment, and had established a communication with it by combining her own useless rope and the handle of her parasol. As I entered, unannounced—for attendance was rigidly denied her—and she had, singularly enough, no maid of her own, she was sitting up in bed, engaged in tolling solemnly at this wire, which, indeed, exceeded her most sanguine expectations, for with every jerk she gave, she rang the alarm-bell. It was placed at the top of the house, so not easily accessible, and the wire, which pervaded the hotel, being of too great importance to be cut, she was mistress of the situation.

'I have been tolling,' observed she with satisfaction, 'ever since daybreak, as though for morning-prayers.'

The Lady Letitia was only at last induced to pay her bill by a pious fraud. She was informed that one of the directors of the company had offered to take the risk on his shoulders, and understanding thereby that she could annoy her foe, the manager, no longer by stopping, but would rather benefit him than otherwise, she left the hotel immediately, although in a very unfit state to be moved.

When she recovered, she wrote me a pretty little note, with a coronet on the top of it, expressing her grateful sense of my attentions; my services had been, she was good enough to say, above all price, but she should nevertheless decline to pay me anything, upon principle. According to law, she had been led to understand that a medical man could not exact remuneration for the performance of his duties: she might be right or she might be wrong; but at all events she preferred, she said, to have the matter tried in court, before running into any unnecessary expense.

SCHOOLING IN INDIA.

At a time like this, when our armies are struggling against terrible odds in one of the fiercest contests that ever shook India to its centre, it is by no means out of place to inquire more closely than we have been wont to do, into the actual condition of that country and its people; and as a means of doing so, we cannot turn our attention to a more fitting subject than their schools.

From official inquiries into the state of education amongst the masses of the population of the Bengal presidency, it would appear that in five districts in which the state of indigenous education is most favourable as compared with other divisions, the proportion of adults who have received any degree of instruction is 6 per cent. of the entire population, so that there remain ninety-four persons in every hundred wholly destitute of education. In the least favoured districts, the proportion is above two educated persons in every hundred.

The entire population of this presidency—that is, of Upper and Lower Bengal—may be taken at thirty-eight millions, of which above fourteen millions may be set down as children, and of these we may fairly assume two-thirds to be of an instructible age, seeing that in India children mostly commence school when five years old. Now, inasmuch as the data collected on this subject shew that of the children of an instructible age only 7 per cent. receive any kind or amount of education, it follows that there are upwards of nine millions of children throughout Upper and Lower Bengal alone of an age to receive instruction, yet totally without it. Taking in the same way the adult population of twenty-four millions, and deducting from these the proportion of educated persons—namely, 5 per cent.—we find there remain nearly twenty-three millions of the adult population entirely without instruction.

Such being the state of native education in this one division of the Indian empire, it would not be very difficult to arrive at a tolerably accurate conclusion as to the total number of individuals, adult and juvenile, of the entire population of British India wholly devoid of any instruction whatever. We do not believe that on a general average there would be found above four per cent. of the entire population able to read or write in the smallest degree, seeing that the whole of the female population—with the exception of the nautch-girls—are altogether and habitually left without any attempt at education. This being the case, the result would be, that there are in the Indian territories of Great Britain not fewer than one hundred and thirty-four millions of totally uneducated persons! A fearful amount of uncounteracted ignorance, superstition, and vice in the hands of the fanatic priesthood and the evil-minded chieftains, to work upon to their own bad ends.

The extent of private tuition among the Mussulmans or Hindoos is very small indeed, if we except the chief cities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, where of late years a few of the leading natives have availed themselves of private instruction for their children, both male and female. The public educational establishments of the Mofussil of indigenous growth may be divided into the common vernacular schools, and schools partaking more of the character of colleges. In these latter, Persian, Arabic, and Sanscrit are taught; seldom the three in any one establishment, but usually the schools are either Persian, Arabic, or Sanscrit.

The teachers of these are mostly of the Brahmanical caste, many living in extreme poverty, and supported mainly by presents of money and food. The scholars consist of boarders and day-pupils, who, in exchange for the learning imparted, supply their instructors with the daily necessities of life, and also perform for them many little household duties. The age at which pupils attend these institutions ranges between eight and twenty, though there are some who remain to their twenty-second year. The instruction imparted consists of general literature, rhetoric, law, logic, medicine, and astrology.

In these high-class schools, the income in money of the pundits, or professors, varies very much, ranging, indeed, from the merest pittance to a very liberal amount. It has been stated that the average monthly income of three hundred of these learned instructors

is not less than L.6, 10s.; but the correctness of the figures may very well be doubted, as this class of men are extremely tenacious of giving information concerning their mode of living, property, &c. If, however, we assume this amount to be about correct, it shews that the cost of educating the pupils of these establishments is extremely high, far beyond the real value of the learning imparted, for the average number of students at each college does not often exceed seven.

If, however, we inquire into the *quality* as well as the cost of the education taught by these Brahmanical pundits, we shall assuredly arrive at the conclusion, that they do little enough to elevate the character or improve the condition of the people. There is, indeed, no lack of indigenous literature in India. A late official return went to show that during the last fifty years, there had been not less than five hundred and fifteen persons engaged in literary publications in Bengal.* The same document tells us that in the year 1853-4, there were two hundred and fifty works in the native languages published in the city of Calcutta alone.

The works on grammar, logic, and law may pass without much comment; but the absurdly fabulous and disgustingly immoral recitals contained in nearly all their most popular dramas, poems, and histories, leave little room for surprise that the people for whose edification these are published should prove false, base, and cruel to the last degree.

The schools of medicine are less hurtful, though the little of really practical knowledge they inculcate is so blended with absurd quackeries and strange fallacies, as to excite our pity. In those colleges where astrology, mythology, and philosophy are taught, we find the wildest fantasies, the greatest infidelity, and the grossest licentiousness mixed up with the daily teachings. Truly has it been said in one of the government reports on indigenous education in Bengal and Behar, that the followers of these schools of philosophy are intemperate and licentious in their habits and manners, not only believing that intoxicating liquors, and other vicious indulgences, are permitted, but that that they are enjoined by the system they profess.

If such be the system and the *morale* of the higher class of native schools, what shall we find prevailing among the hundreds of village schools and inferior institutions of towns, the teachers of which receive emoluments in the shape of fees, and presents of money to the monthly value of from two shillings to two pounds, with an uncertain addition of donations of rice, fruit, fish, &c. It would be well if we could flatter ourselves that these schools were no worse than a negative evil—that they simply effected no good. It can scarcely be said that the acquisition of reading and writing is an advantage, as the adepts employ their powers to little good purpose, more frequently for evil ends. The instruction in these schools, beyond the mere forming and deciphering characters, is of the loosest and grossest description—a mere learning by rote without any attempt at instruction.

The course in these seminaries is to place the young scholar during a month after his first entrance to practise the formation of the alphabet, which he does by writing on the loose sandy floor of the schoolroom with one of his fingers or a small stick. From this initiatory stage he is promoted to the next class, where he is taught to construct words and short sentences by writing on a palm-leaf with an iron style. Thence he proceeds to use the finer leaf of the plantain; and finally, when well advanced, he is

* Returns Relating to Native Printing-presses and Publications in Bengal. 1855.

taught to write on paper hardened by the juice of the tamarind-tree, and to draw up petitions, business documents, accounts, &c. In some of the Hindi, though not in the Bengali schools, a wooden board or a brass plate smeared over with mud, or chalk and water, is employed for tracing words by means of a wooden style, as well as for calculations in arithmetic.

It would be difficult to picture anything more miserable than the lot of the ordinary teacher in a native school, or more wretched than the localities usually selected for their operations. So poor, indeed, are the majority of them, that they most frequently add to their professional duties the occupation of accountants to bazaar-keepers, letter-writers, compilers of almanacs, petition-drawers, and such-like work—anything, in short, by which their pens may add to their scanty means.

The village school will frequently be held in an open shed, occasionally in the covered place in which the weekly market is held, on which day a holiday is given to the scholars, and the pedagogue occupies himself in the busy duties of what, in Europe, we should call the 'clerk of the market.'

In the common schools now under notice, the language employed for instruction is Bengali in Bengal Proper, and Hindostani in Behar and other districts; and not only is this the case with the Hindoo population, but the same rule applies to the Mussulman schools of these districts; for although the Hindostani is the common *spoken* language of the better classes of Mussulmans in Bengal and Behar, it is never employed as the means of instruction in their schools. The *Urdu* language, again, is far more poetic, and much richer in variety and force of expression, as it is also more polished, and is the language employed in the pulpit, and in popular tales and poetry; yet it has never found its way into any of the class-books of the schools, where it might be employed to the utmost advantage.

The number of Mussulman teachers, even where Mussulman scholars are taught, are very few. By far the majority of instructors in these schools are of the 'writer caste,' though the number of Brahmans engaged in teaching is also large, contrary as it is to the custom of their caste, by which it is considered degrading to give instruction in any but the higher branches of learning.

As regards the classes or castes of the pupils of these schools, the Brahmans are invariably in the preponderance; next to whom, following pretty closely, is the writer caste, the weaver and other castes keeping at a tolerably respectful distance. Twenty years ago, it was rare indeed that the least degree of instruction was enjoyed by any of the lower castes of tailors, water-drawers, sweepers, or such like; but in the present day we behold learning fully established as a republic of letters, much to the disgust and indignation of the proud high-caste Brahman, who grows up impressed with the utmost abhorrence of all innovation—a true conservative of the old school.

Such domestic instruction as is imparted in families is of a still more unsatisfactory character than that taught in the elementary schools. It is indeed little more than a handing down from father to son a knowledge of the mere rudiments of education sufficient to enable the latter to follow in the footsteps of his parent. Pride of family frequently prevents wealthy or high-born men from sending their sons to any school that may exist in their neighbourhood; sometimes, too, it is poverty which compels the home instruction of the zemindar, the trader, the headman, &c.

Such, then, is a brief outline of the state of indigenous education in Bengal; and having taken this view of it, we may render the picture more complete if we glance at the educational institutions and efforts

of the Europeans in the same part of the country. Missionaries from nearly every society in Europe are to be found, or *were* to be met with before the late rebellion, in almost every province of India. Wherever these unwearied toilers for the truth located themselves, they formed the nucleus of a school generally for instruction in the vernacular. Contrary to the fact in the indigenous schools of the country, their pupils were mostly of the lowest castes; hence naturally the Brahmans and other caste-proud men viewed the missionaries and their labours with jealousy and hatred. All the opposition they could give to missionary preaching and missionary teaching they did give, and in no sparing measure.

The progress made by these schools, although in some instances sufficiently encouraging, has been, on the whole, extremely limited, not only from many opposing causes, but also from a want of qualified teachers, and a great dearth of school-books in the vernacular. It was not until within the last few years that the labours of the Rev. J. Long and others placed within the reach of Christian teachers useful works in the vernacular of an unobjectionable character. The instruction imparted at these establishments is of an entirely elementary nature, but thoroughly sound, and calculated to fit the pupils in after-life for some useful and profitable career.

The educational department of the Bengal government is of comparatively recent origin. It is composed of a director of public instruction, a secretary, a staff of inspectors for the various districts, and a large number of trained teachers in every branch of education. There are professors, too, for the various government colleges, and altogether a very formidable array of workers in the field.

But although the official labours of the government staff are directed towards such private and missionary schools as apply for 'grants in aid,' they are mainly employed in supervising their own establishments. It is to be regretted that the annual reports of this department are so utterly meagre and barren of all practical details as to render them valueless for our present purpose. By far the greater portion of the annual votes for education are expended in the liberal salaries of the director-general and his staff; whilst the sum left for the real workers—the teachers and other subordinates—is insignificant in the extreme compared with the amount of work to be done.

In Calcutta, there are the Presidency, the Hindoo, the Engineering, and other colleges, where professors hold their classes with all the form, and some of the effect, of similar institutions in Europe. At these, as well as at the Hoogly, Dacca, and the other Mofussil colleges, the principal classes are composed of high-caste and well-born Hindoos; indeed, the number of those from poorer sections of native society is very small. The proficiency attained by the students of these colleges, as well as by those of the medical college, is such as would be encouraging were it enduring, or did it produce fruit of any useful kind. Unfortunately, however, the most that our present system of teaching effects is to overthrow the old superstitions of the land, without replacing them with any better faith, proselytism being a forbidden thing in the Company's colleges, punishable with instant dismissal, so careful are the authorities to avoid any appearance of offending the prejudices of the natives.

To those who inquire the reason why our college education should prove of so little use to the students in after-life, we reply that it is *caste* which prevents them availing themselves of much of their knowledge. The Brahmans and the writer caste can engage in but a few occupations. To step beyond that social limit, to break through the old bounds, and engage in any handicraft, or art or calling in which the hands would be required, would be to entail on them all the direful

penalties of Hindoo fanaticism and bigotry—a consequence which, as yet, but one or two of the rising generation have dared. Until *caste*—the curse of India—be trampled under foot, we can do but little for the country or the people.

BURIED ALIVE.

It was on a bleak afternoon in the beginning of last March that we stood at the drawing-room windows of our house in the village of Bout du Monde, in Savoy, watching the clouds careering wildly over the sky, and speculating whether M. le Curé and Made-moiselle, his sister, would come to tea. The huge mountains opposite began to look ghastly as the bright rosy reflections from the setting sun faded from their snow-covered summits; the pine-trees in our garden creaked and swayed like the masts of a tempest-tossed ship; and as the sighing, moaning, whistling wind lulled for a second, there fell some heavy flakes of snow.

'Close the *jalousies*, Annette, and draw the curtains.' Poor miserable things these last were—thin muslin with a red cotton border. The fire blazed and crackled merrily as our fair-haired Jessie threw on log after log; our moderator-lamp shone like a small sun, lighting up even the most distant of the atrocious engravings of 'Passages in the Lives of Diane de Poitiers and Jeanne d'Arc,' which covered one of our walls; while on the other bloomed twin samplers, dedicated to *Un Père Chéri*, and *Une Mère Chérie*, and on which were embroidered wreaths of heartsease and forget-me-nots, each surmounted by a dove carrying a large O in its beak—undoubtedly crowns for the heads of the cherished father and mother. Pussy lay curled up in his basket on the rug, pretending to sleep, but keenly alive to all that was going on at the tea-table.

We were determined in the most Christian spirit to shew the curé and his sister how much more comfortable we English were than our Savoyard neighbours. So the finest of our table-linen, the best of our china, were brought out for the occasion; a profusion of tea-cakes and preserves loaded the table; while coffee-pot and tea-pot had been so well polished they might have been mistaken for silver. The mention of them is premature, as they were only to appear at the last moment. We were not quite so bad as the lady 'who loved to sit in a snug room and think of the poor wretches at sea;' but we all certainly did peculiarly enjoy, on this stormy evening, the air of comfort which the inviting, soft-cushioned easy-chairs, the thick carpet, and well-spread board, lit up by the warm fire-glow, gave to our country quarters.

'Here he is!' we exclaimed, as we heard the curé's voice calling through the kitchen window to Annette to go and open the garden gate. One side of the house faced the high road.

'*La petite fille* is actually come with him,' cried Jessie, running back from the door, where she had been to take observations. This was unusual, the one generally following the other at a short interval, for our curé did not like to be seen walking with a woman, even though that woman might be his sister. In they came, speckled with snow, but with cheery gleaming faces.

M. le Curé was a thin flat man, so flat that he looked like a deal-plank dressed up in a priest's long coat, a garment which closely resembles an old-fashioned scanty lady's pelisse, buttoning all the way up the middle. He always wore his best fringed sash and newest *tricorne* when he paid us a visit. He had a small wizened face, in which twinkled a pair of waggish gray eyes, their lively expression heightened by a decidedly turned-up nose. It was worth some-

thing to hear him preach, particularly when he addressed his parishioners on the subject of the cholera. '*Pardonnez moi, mes chers frères*' (a long pause)—'*passiez moi l'expression, s'il vous plaît*'—with emphasis and the pout of a spoiled child—'*mais, vous êtes des pourceaux de vrais pourceaux*'—in a tone embracing two octaves. Another effective pause, and then a rapid very clear explanation of the peculiar habits of de '*vrais pourceaux*.'

He was so sociable, so full of dry humour, and, withal, delighted so much in our family circle, that we never failed to remark, after one of his long visits, 'What can have induced that man to become a priest? —to shut himself out from all the tender charities of domestic life, formed, too, as he is to enjoy them, as witness his devotion to *la Petite*.' This *petite*, as he always called his sister, and as she always called herself, was a woman quite six feet high, as thin as mortal living frame can be, and with the longest hands and feet I think I ever saw. She was very like, yet very unlike her brother. Instead of a cocked nose, she had a majestic aquiline; instead of small, merry eyes, very large, melancholy ones: nevertheless, there was the mysterious likeness of children of the same parents between them. The hair of both was equally gray, but we were always given to understand that *la Petite* was many years younger than the curé. To hear him talk of her, you were led to conclude that she was a sort of St Thérèse, mystical and meditative, never so happy as when poring over what she called her '*Grenade*'—some great cannon of a theologian of the middle ages—her *beau-idéal* of a saint being Ignatius Loyola. One day we lent mademoiselle *Les Voleurs de Londres*, the French name for *Oliver Twist*. The curé brought it back very soon. 'O no! *la Petite* could not read such a book;' and, to Jessie's horror, he gave it as his opinion that ce petit drôle d'Olivier ought to have been hanged!

To listen to *la Petite*'s own account of herself, you might be pardoned for believing her without religion of any kind—unless we call adoration of her brother one. She would demur even to this when we observed on their strong mutual affection.

'Yes,' she would answer, 'I love him, and he loves me; notwithstanding, we sometimes bang the door at one another: it never goes further. Our curé is a man with a head, I can tell you.'

By dint of entreaty and some gentle force, we at last settled mademoiselle in one of the large chairs by the fire, with her feet on a footstool.

'*Une si petite fille comme moi*,' she expostulated, stretching out her lengthy limbs, and basking in the genial glow. Then began the ceremony of coffee-drinking; the Savoyards are very Turks in their love of coffee.

'Ah, Mees Jessie, you know the weakness of us curés,' said M. B—, as she filled his cup to the brim with sugar.

'Give our curé his coffee, and he is happy,' remarked *la Petite*: 'coffee is his religion.'

This was only one of our St Thérèse's usual rather startling observations about her brother.

'Very true,' said the brother demurely. 'I did not get my mid-day cup of coffee last Sunday; and I assure you, madame, I could think of nothing else through the whole of vespers. A cup of coffee haunted me,' and his little eyes twinkled.

'Oh, Monsieur le Curé!' cried Jessie suddenly, 'how did you ever come to be a priest?'

He coloured a little, hesitated, and then said: 'Well, I will tell you; and no more reasonable time than the present, as this happens to be the eve of the anniversary of the great peril which decided my vocation.'

Jessie was too much abashed by her own thoughtless

speech even to say 'Thank you;' but the curé, soon recovering his usual manner, enscathed himself in a great leather chair in front of the fire, with our dear pussy, whom he always insulted by calling 'un gros matou,' at his feet. As soon as he heard the click of his sister's knitting-needles, he gave us a look just like the one he bestowed on his congregation before beginning his sermon; and when we were all quiet, he commenced his story.

In the autumn of 1823, just thirty-five years ago, my sister and I went to pay a visit to an aunt, married to a wealthy wood-merchant of Bellinzona. I was then eighteen, and la Petite some years younger. Our uncle and aunt, who had no children, grew very fond of us, and would not hear of our leaving them; they talked of adopting the little one, and of taking me into the wood-business. We on our part were willing enough to stay with them; for never before had we known so much comfort, our parents being rich in nothing but sons and daughters. The winter of 1823-4 was more than usually severe; the snow lay deep in the valley; all the small streams were frozen, so no saw-mills could work. Our uncle grumbled and smoked, and smoked and grumbled, from morning till night. He had several large orders, and he was uneasy at the delay he was forced to make in executing them. You must know that the wood is felled in summer, but not removed till winter, when, by means of long slides, formed of rough trunks of trees, on which water is poured to procure a coating of ice, the timber is conveyed to the foot of the mountain. Now, that winter not one among the stoutest-hearted of the Burratori—the men are so called who cut and bring the wood to the lake—would venture up to the forests. There was nothing for it but to wait till the cold moderated. But February, with its wild bleak days came, and passed, and still the men refused to work. At last some warm sunny days ushered in the month of March. The snow left the valley, and the icy fetters of the merry streams melted quite away. The sunshine without brought us sunshine within; my aunt's husband now whistled about the house, making each of his fingers go off in small reports as a sort of *feu de joie*. Seven Burratori had agreed to go up the mountain. As during the last three weeks there had been neither a fresh fall of snow, nor any indication of a thaw, the weather-wise declared no danger was to be apprehended. In fact, the mountain, from its nature, was little subject to avalanches, nor had any worth speaking of occurred within the memory of man.

Tired out by such long inactivity, I was wild to join the intended expedition, and at last wearied my uncle into granting me permission to begin my apprenticeship at once. I was put under the care of an old fellow called Picurio, generally recognised as the chief of the Burratori. We were to set out on the Monday morning, and it was hoped the job would be completed by the following Saturday.

We had, however, forgotten to ask la Petite's consent. She, who had never been separated from me even for a day since her birth, was in tears from morning till night at the idea of my leaving her for a whole week. My uncle was, in truth, a soft-hearted man, so he agreed to go with us himself, and take the little girl also as far as Aquila, a village in the Val Blegno, lying at the base of the mountain to which we were bound. This arrangement put an end to my sister's tears; though, as the Burratori stop out night and day till the work is finished, she would see as little of me as if she had remained at Bellinzona. We were well provided with woollen wrappers and the means of kindling a fire; and as you may believe, the thought of this bivouac had infinite charms for my imagination.

The cold on that memorable Monday morning was perhaps as intense as it had been during the winter; but as there was no wind, the men kept to their engagement. I cannot affirm that sleeping under a rock was as delightful in reality as in anticipation; still, I relished being treated as a man, and never complained. On the Wednesday, old Picurio declared it was beginning to thaw, and on Thursday it was perfectly clear that the frost had broken up; indeed, we heard the snow slipping down the grooves cut in the mountain's side by the spring and summer torrents. The Burratori did not seem to care, for the pine-trees prevented any dangerous accumulation of snow in our immediate vicinity. Our only danger lay in going to and from the forest, our night's shelter being in the natural caves formed by projecting rocks, which, as a matter of course, were on that part of the mountain where there was no wood. We strained every nerve to finish our task on Friday evening.

'Three or four hours more would have done it,' said Picurio in a desponding tone, as darkness overtook us, and a large stack of timber still lay before us.

'Well, then, let us be up by peep of day,' cried I, 'and we may all be back at Bellinzona by the evening.'

On the morrow, we only mustered five; three of our party were missing. Had they deserted, or only gone on in advance?

'We shall soon know,' said the remaining Burratori, and with one accord they sent forth such wild, unearthly yells, ending in shrill peals of mad laughter, that, though I had heard of their mode of holding communication with their comrades at a distance, I was nevertheless disagreeably startled. These yells can be heard an incredibly long way off. When there could be no reasonable doubt that the missing men had deserted us, many were the smothered exclamations of '*Oibò gatto di marmo*' ('cat of marble' meaning lazy fellow), 'you shall pay for this.'

The loss dispirited us, for the work still to be done required all our original strength of hands to get it finished in the time proposed. The dawn was just whitening the horizon when we began our ascent, and a little breeze, barely enough to make the pine-branches quiver, was blowing from the west. Picurio's only son, a stout, handsome young man, the wag of our party, prophesied we should have a fine day; but as the light increased, great black masses of clouds came up from the south-west.

'A bad sign, I say,' cried Picurio; 'we had better turn back.'

I was somewhat vexed at this advice, and answered hastily: 'Those who are afraid, may go back; I shall keep my promise to my uncle, if I send down the rest of the wood unassisted,' and I walked on; the rest followed, but in silence.

Our path up the mountain, now winding in and out through pines, now passing under steep, bare rocks perforated with caverns, ran along the edge of a ravine several hundred feet deep, at the bottom of which lay, silenced under a huge snow-drift, one of the great mountain-streams which in summer could be heard miles away, as it dashed and roared in its precipitous descent to join and swell the wide Ticino. Far above, as high as we could see, were mountain-tops bristling with spears of sea-green ice, which, as I gazed, were gilded by the rays of the rising sun.

'Look!' cried I, 'is not that the promise of a fine day?'

Old Picurio shook his head as before, for at the instant a pale, watery sun, encircled by a ring of vapour, shot into view. In another moment it was entirely obscured by the clouds which speedily covered the whole sky. The sighing breeze suddenly grew into a turbulent wind, and some pricking sleet fell.

The men stood still, looking uneasily about them,

muttering between their teeth: 'Ah! vacca d'un ven' mostro!' (Cow of a monstrous wind!)

'I told you so,' cried Picurio; 'those clouds are a sign of evil. Let us go back—we have no time to lose. The holy Virgin protect us from an avalanche!'

'Nonsense, father!' replied the son; 'you know there are never avalanches on this mountain.'

'Don't say so, my son; I remember hearing my father speak of a terrible one.'

'As big as my hand,' answered the young man laughing.

Nevertheless, the old man's words had produced an effect; for, as if with one accord, we all turned round and began to descend towards the village. The wind would cease as if by magic, then come rushing from every quarter of the heavens 'a mighty and a strong wind;' the sleet changed to thick fast-falling snow, which, whirling in mad eddies, and flying up and down, almost blinded us. We walked as quickly as we could, following Picurio, who had assumed the lead; but what with the teasing of the wind, and the slipperiness of the path, we could scarcely keep our feet. After one blast, which nearly hurled us down the ravine, we joined arms, and kept as close together as we could. Not a word was spoken; for by this time the bravest heart amongst us quaked with fear, and many an anxious glance was cast around in search of any signs of the dreaded disaster.

We had reached a point about half-way down the mountain, where the path passed through a mere cleft between two rocks. Here we were forced to go two by two. At that instant, a boom like that of a distant waterfall struck on our ears. We stopped, raised our eyes in terror, and saw, right above us, a large white mass like a living thing, rise slowly with a convulsive heave from the edge of a rock, hover for a second, topple, then come crashing down.

'The avalanche! the avalanche!' burst from every lip. 'To the left, to the caves,' shouted Picurio, dragging me along with him. In the twinkling of an eye down fell the enormous white mass in front of our refuge; there, we were unhurt, but shut in between a wall of rock behind, a wall of ice in front.

After the first moment of bewilderment, Picurio cried out: 'Who is here besides me?' It was pitchy dark—no seeing even one's own hand.

Mine was the only voice that replied.

'My son! my son!' exclaimed the old man; 'oh, that I had died for thee, my son;' and I heard him weeping. Awful were those moments. Buried alive—a father's agony the only sign of life breaking the stillness and darkness of the grave. Often in the silent watches of the night do I hear again that voice of woe—often in dreams I live over again that terrible scene.

'Have you your axe, young man?' said Picurio.

No. In the perilous moment when he had forced me under the rock, the axe had slipped out of my hand.

With all the energy of despair, we flung the whole weight of our bodies against the inert mass which shut us into our living tomb—hopeless—hopeless. I must have then fallen into a lethargy; for the avalanche fell in the early morning, and the Ave Maria was ringing when I recovered my consciousness. Yes, we distinctly heard the bell of the church of Aquila. No words can describe the rapture I felt in listening to this voice from without; it seemed to say distinctly: 'Hope in God's mercy.'

'Let us pray,' said the old man. We recited the Angelus, and told the rosary. After that we felt more composed, and sat down side by side. The sound of the church-bells had taken away the horrible feeling of being entirely cut off from the living. We felt sure that, as soon as we were missed, all the village would turn out on the morrow to seek for us;

and we agreed that, as we were able to hear the bells so clearly, it would not be difficult to make ourselves heard by any passers. Luckily, our day's food was in our pockets; we divided it into several portions, so that it should last twenty-four hours. Within that period we never doubted obtaining our release.

Presently the church-bell began to ring again. It could not be the De Profundis; sufficient time had not elapsed; besides, the strokes were quick and sharp, not slow and solemn. Glory be to God, it was the storm-bell; the alarm was given, and good souls would soon be on the search for us. Neither Picurio nor I spoke, so eagerly did we strain our ears to catch the sound of approaching steps, long before it was possible that any one could have reached the mountain. I think the beating of our hearts might have been heard in that dead silence.

At last, at last we distinguished the barking of a dog. I recognised the bark at once: it was Bibi, la Petite's pet. Nearer and nearer it came, until we could hear him whining and scratching the snow which hid us. Then the blessed sound of human voices became audible. Full of hope and joy, we threw ourselves once more against our snow-barricade; we dug at it with hands and nails, striving to open a crevice through which we might let our friends know our situation. We shouted with all our might, but the noise fell back heavily on our own ears. Many times we were aware that the seekers were close to us—we heard them calling to one another. We could hear, but with anguish we understood that we could not make ourselves heard. Near as the searchers were, we could hold no communication with them. Exclamations of horror, pity, and grief, met our ears. The names of our unfortunate comrades were pronounced in tones that plainly revealed their sad fate. There was a bustle, many directions of how best to carry away the bodies, wonder about us, and then our expected deliverers departed. A horrible despair took possession of me as their retreating steps grew fainter and fainter; but poor Picurio always cried: 'Let us pray; God's right arm is long enough to reach us even here.'

I tried to pray, but my thoughts wandered to my home; all the childish griefs I had known were forgotten, and I wept bitter salt tears to think I should never see father or mother, brothers or sisters again; all my faults to them rose up in judgment against me; how solemnly I vowed that should God grant me life, I would never again rebel against the will of my parents! And la Petite, what would she do without me? I was sure she would die of grief. As the night wore on, my thoughts took another turn—the whole scene of my own death, the finding of my frozen body, the despair of my poor little sister, were moving pictures before me. I could not detach my fancy from the phantoms it had evoked. It was painfully curious the way in which I arranged and re-arranged all the details, sparing myself no revolting minutiae. I suppose I must at last have dropped asleep, for I knew nothing more till Picurio called to me that he heard the bell for early mass. I raised myself to a sitting-posture, and we each ate a portion of our bread. All that day and the ensuing night passed in alternations of hope and despair. By the next morning—the beginning of the third day since our entombment—our little provision of food was exhausted. We were oppressed by feverish thirst and gnawing hunger—a horrid death was before us, the fate of those who had perished at once was to be envied in comparison with the lingering suffering we anticipated.

We had ceased to speak, ceased to pray; I had no hope now—no faith. In moody silence we sat apart, watching, I may say, the approach of the pangs of death, when suddenly the deep hush was broken by a

familiar sharp bark. It was Bibi again! Oh, the unutterable joy of hearing the little fellow tearing and scratching at the snow blocking up our cave! There was another sound that made hot tears rain down my cheeks; it was a child's voice—no other than la Petite—crying: 'He is here, uncle. I am sure he is here. Oh, dig, good men, dig fast!'

Our hearts melted within us as we heard many steps nearing our prison. There was danger, too, for many cautions were given. The child's voice still rose clear above all: 'Make haste; do make haste. Give me a hoe; I can dig. My poor brother will be dead, if you don't make haste.'

At last a long stick was pushed through the snow-wall; it touched me; I seized it. There was a shout of 'A miracle! a miracle!' mingled with the child's wild cry of 'Brother! brother!' Another stick was thrust through and caught by Picurio. Not a whisper was now to be heard; every one worked; minutes seemed hours to us before an opening was made large enough to drag us through.

When we once more saw daylight and dear familiar faces, we fell down fainting with joy. We were lifted out and laid at the feet of the old curé, who, in spite of age and infirmities, had ventured up the mountain to bless and encourage the efforts of the men who, touched by the child's agony of grief, had consented to make one more search for us.

'Thank God, my sons, for your deliverance,' were the old priest's first words, 'and devote to His service the lives He has so miraculously preserved.'

'It was this, Mees Jessie, that led me to become a priest; and la Petite, who, through God's mercy, saved my life, has made my home her home.'

'She would have made a capital lady-abbess, though,' said M. B—, looking at her with unfeigned pride.

'And old Picurio?' asked Jessie.

'He died in my uncle's house.'

THE CUMBERLAND STATESMAN.

'The fashion of this world passeth away.' It was so in Paul's days, nor has the world's fashion grown more stable since. It is, however, only 'the fashion' that is so unenduring; the substance of the world's life is much the same it ever has been since the days of man's pilgrimage were reduced to threescore years and ten. There is eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage, and deaths and funerals; while it is still true, according to the proverb, the 'one half the world does not know how the other lives.' Yet 'the fashion' passes away, and seems to be more fleeting in our days than it ever was in the old time before us. Science and art have sent a mighty flood swoop against, through, and over all our ancient ways of doing, so that the tone and aspect of life has been in a great measure altered. The son is no longer like his father; the young lord is no longer a continuation of the old lord. The fashion of dress passes downwards from class to class, till it vanishes utterly among the clouds on the back of the beggar.

Change has so infected England, that there is scarcely a corner uninfluenced by it. Old-fashioned folk are all dying off: even the Cumberland farmer is becoming an altered man; so much so, that we are fain to trace some lineaments of his old wrinkled face before he drops into the grave, and be wholly forgotten. Our hero is one of those farmers or 'statesmen' who dwell in some one or other of the dales among the Cumberland and Westmoreland mountains. They are a class of men, in many instances, boasting a very ancient pedigree; perhaps we should not say that they boast of this, for they are hardly conscious thereof, further than to know that time out of mind they have been at the same place—the Alisons o' t' How, the Jopsons o' t' Hollows, or the Wrens o' t' Lanthwaite. Thus

have they lived on from generation to generation—tillers of the ground, and keepers of sheep; a hardy, long-lived race, fed and clothed out of their own produce; men mighty to struggle with the storm on the mountains, lovers of cur-dogs, and with here and there a tradition of some forefather lost in a snow-storm, or drowned coming from market. They are a people who reckon not by days, and months, and years, so much as by fasts and festivals, fairs and merry-makings, great battles, and the times of great men. For the last two they are especially notable: you may hear them date a very ordinary event by the battle of Trafalgar, or Waterloo, or the days of Pitt, or any other prominent man of the time; and in this they shew forth the old Norse love of war and heroes, which still animates the hearts of their pastoral descendants.

There was once in all the dales one 'statesman' who bore the title of king—a title which was hereditary, having first been gained, doubtless, by the family's superior wealth in sheep and kine, coupled with a liberal spirit of hospitality. It was a bare title, however, conferring no vested rights, but withal some honour and parochial consequence. For instance, his majesty usually sat at the head of the table on all public merry-makings, his voice carried somewhat of a princely weight with it in all disputes between neighbour and neighbour, and when he died, his funeral had the largest attendance, and there was the greatest abundance of cheese and bread and ale. So exclusively was this title confined to one family, that no other was ever known to usurp it, no matter how rich in lands and tenements; and, in one instance, we have known it still given to the lawful heir, though he himself was a most sorry fellow, and without a foot of land beyond the measure of his last bed in 'the chapel garth.'

These dale-kings are now nearly extinct; their descendants lost in the common population, and their lands passed into other hands. The dalesmen like to do all things of a special concern after a substantial fashion. They christen, marry, and bury one another in a right English style of hospitality. When an old 'statesman puts up his feet,' as they say of one who dies, two from every house in all the dale are warned to the funeral; and it is the honour of a house to have it said, that there was plenty of everything on the occasion, and that the old man was 'put by decent.' They would count it an ill start in life for any child to be christened without a goodly gathering of friends and neighbours to witness the ceremony, and partake of their hospitality; but it is at a wedding where you best see this characteristic of the dalesmen. There are no marriages solemnised in the little chapel in the valley, and so they must needs go to the mother-church—in some instances a distance of eight or nine miles. It was their custom to start early in the morning, all on horseback, to the number of fifteen or twenty, and one horse bearing double 'with pillion,' whereon the bride and bridegroom returned from church. It must have been a fair sight on a bright summer morning, when the shadows of the rocks were lying cool upon the vale, to have seen the cavalcade ambling down through the defile of the mountains, and by the shore of the blue lake. On their return, there would not be so much order, the spirits of the men being exalted with ale; and you might often have witnessed very furious riding, for it was counted an honour to be first home from the kirk. In this substantial fashion the old farmer christened and married his children, and so gave them a cheerful start in life.

Let us take a view of the old farmhouse. It is a low, irregular building, the roof thereof being covered with moss, very modest in pretensions, and, indeed, giving but little outward token of its inward

comfort and hospitality. Its front duly in spring-time receives a fresh coating of whitewash, and very bonnily, on a summer-day, does it gleam from beneath the full foliage of its guardian sycamores. Adjoining it are placed the stable and *lath* or barn, the cow-house, and other farm-buildings. But let us enter the old man's dwelling-place. The door is low, so you must beware of breaking your head. This little porch which first receives us is both a comfort and ornament to the house. There is a low stone vessel on either side, whereon you may see in the morning the clean scoured milk-pails placed to dry. In one corner there are three or four shepherds' staves, or 'felt sticks,' as they are called, being about six feet long, and shod at one end with an iron prong. There are, moreover, hanging up in the porch two or three old gray coats, used for wet markets, Sabbaths, and fells. The room you enter from the porch is called 'the house,' wherein the family lives. It has a clean stone-floor, and before the large window that looks upon a garden, there is a long, dark, oaken table, by the side of which extend two fir-forms, to serve instead of chairs. The chimney is one of a very ancient sort, being quite open to the house, with the fire lying upon the hearth. Far up in its capacious height are hanging hams and sides of bacon, to receive the benefit of the 'peat-reek,' while upon shelves attached to the beams that support the floor over the house are cheese, and dried legs of mutton, and bread. The farmer lives in sight of his eatables, which doubtless tends to keep his stomach in a quiet and healthy state, and, moreover, serves to set off the substance and abundance of his estate. It is common, indeed, to infer poverty or niggardliness, where this show of provision does not meet the visitor's eye; and we have heard of a servant-lad, who, on going to his 'place,' and seeing nothing in the chimney, or on the shelves, was determined to run away. He concluded, however, that home was too far to run that night, and so he must needs stay where he was. On retiring to bed, he found a large oaken chest in the room, and being curious to lift the lid, he saw therein a great abundance of hams, legs of mutton, &c., which fully satisfied him that there would be plenty to eat. The reason of the provision being put out of sight was through the housewife having been white-washing and cleaning the house against Whitsuntide, according to custom. At the far side of the house stands an old clock, which seems out of all fashion with the clocks of the present day; and on the side separating the house and parlour there is a long black oak cupboard, with the initials of the original owner, and generally dated early in the seventeenth century. We find this date upon all the old oaken furniture in the farmhouses, which seems to shew that the farmers of that time must have been somewhat prosperous, for modern furniture cannot compare with it in splendour and costliness. On this piece of furniture you find arranged a goodly show of huge pewter dishes and plates, now wholly out of use, and kept only out of honour for the past. There is generally a tradition or two respecting this pewter—how it was hidden in the orchard when the rebels of '45 invaded England; and how, moreover, it was proposed to do the same with it when there was loud talk of Bonaparte sailing for our shores. The parlour we alluded to as separated from the house by the oak cupboard, is the statesman's bedchamber, choosing to sleep there as well for protection to the house, as to prevent his sons and servants from coming in at untimely hours of a Saturday or a Sunday night, the usual times for sweet-hearting. Behind the house is the kitchen wherein the family live in summer, and in general do all their rough work.

In front of the house is a small garden, which

you enter at the side of the porch. It contains a bed or two of onions, and a few rows of cabbage, besides other vegetables, such as the housewife finds useful. Its flowers are of a sweet and simple character; and if not indigenous, yet a colony of so ancient a date, as to claim a right to be counted as natives. They are such flowers and shrubs as grew in English gardens when Shakespeare lived—daisies, pinks, and polyanthus, thyme, rue, and citron-wood, wall-flowers, tulips, and roses. The rose is the especial favourite, as indeed it should be, as well for its own beauty and fragrance, as because it is the flower of England. The orchard stands generally behind or at the south end of the farmhouse. It consists of a few roods of land planted with apple-trees, a few plum and cherry trees, and in general two pear-trees; for the farmer says that it once used 'to be hanging' for breaking an orchard, but that the law did not count it an orchard unless it contained two pear-trees. This, doubtless, has some far-back reference to the days of King Alfred, for ought we know. An orchard has something in it peculiarly interesting, whether it be for the richness of its purple-tinted blossom, or its golden fruit, or the quiet sunset hours we have many of us spent there in youth. Ever since the days of Shakespeare, it has been consecrated to our English homes.

Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always of an afternoon,

the father of Hamlet was cut off, says the royal ghost; in an orchard, too, Romeo woos his Juliet, and swears by the moon 'that tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops.'

But it is time we should speak of the farmer's estate. It consists of from forty to one hundred acres of meadow and arable land; and besides this, he has right of pasturage on the mountains for sheep from two or three hundred upwards, to one thousand or fifteen hundred. The sheep are of the speckled-faced breed, called Herdwick, and said to have come from Norway. The mutton is very sweet, especially when killed from the pasture, without any previous fattening by turnips. It is manifest that the farmer's main dependence is upon his sheep, and accordingly we find that these are the chief staple of his talk, and subject of his cares. In time past, it was customary for the shepherds to meet on a Sunday morning, before prayers, in 'the chapel garth,' and there talk over their flocks, and give each other such information as they could of any sheep that had wandered from its pasture. You may be sure they were good church-goers and mighty sticklers for a proper celebration of the Sabbath. Very often their dogs were as ceremonious and sabbatical as themselves, accompanying their masters to the chapel with that air of decorum and thoughtfulness which a hard-wrought cur can so well assume. We have heard of a shepherd's dog which continued its visits to the chapel for many a Sunday after its master was dead and gone; and of another which lay upon its master's grave, and made the lonely mountains echo with howling and lamentation. Very often the shepherd swears very roughly at his dog, and threatens 'to give it him' if he does not go better about his work up the breast of the fell; but it generally ends in words; for there is a rough, strong attachment between them, and an accurate and mutual appreciation of each other's merits. Besides his sheep, the Cumberland farmer keeps half-a-dozen or more milch cows, out of which he makes butter for the market of the nearest town, and generally as many cheeses as will serve his own use. He does not grow much corn, and but little oats or wheat, the seasons very often being unfavourable for their growth, and the pasturage of his fields being required in winter and spring for his sheep.

Let us now look at the old farmer himself. He is already past the fourscore years of man's existence, when his strength is but labour and sorrow. There you see him sitting by the fire in his old oak chair, his head bald, and his eyes grown dim, for ever poking the fire with his stick, and complaining of the cold. A while back, and there was his aged partner sitting opposite on the other side of the fire; but her chair is now empty, and she hath left her husband a solitary thing in the world—a last link between the past and present—between many an ancient usage and many a modern improvement. The old man's thoughts are all in the past, for things are managed so differently from what they used to be, that he seems to care little whether they prosper or not. He will have it that there has been no luck since the spinning-wheel was cast aside, and the tea-kettle took its place. He thinks the world has grown very showy and unsubstantial; and, moreover, sadly decayed in morals and good behaviour. There is not, he says, that kindly feeling between neighbour and neighbour which once existed; but every one seems anxious to exalt himself above his fellow, and pride himself upon some vain distinction. In the old time, he was counted the best man who could do the best day's work, was the stoutest wrestler, and never afraid to speak with his enemies to the face. The sons and daughters of a farmer reckoned themselves as no better than the servants; and when a Christmas feast was made, all alike were invited. But now, he says, there is nothing of this; they talk about their education, and are ashamed of their mother-tongue; laying out all their money 'in fashions,' fine to look upon, but without a penny in their pockets to relieve a poor beggar. The old man feels that the evil times have had a bad effect upon himself, and that he is not so good as he used to be, for all things seem to thrust him aside, and to cast him out as if the world could get better on without him. He knows, too, that he is not 'charitable;' nor indeed can be, for now there are no beggars to bestow alms upon, and so no means of gaining credit in that respect. It was very different once. There were many beggars who made regular calls at the farmhouses for the wonted handful of meal or crust of bread; and this was the light wherein the farmers and their wives understood charity—that charity spoken of by Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. But the beggars are all swept away, housed in 'the union' or cast into the grave, and so there is a necessary end of charity and of the means of getting to heaven. It is thus the old statesman reasons with himself, and laments over the decadence of Christianity. It is quite a different world which surrounds him from that wherein were formed all his prejudices and likings, his sentiments and opinions; and hence he has a very strong and ingrown hatred towards a Frenchman, not because his larder was once endangered by invasion, but because the French are our hereditary enemies. From his earliest infancy, he learned to fight them in imagination. When a school-boy, it was customary, in games of contest, to name the contending parties as English and French, the latter generally being composed of the worst boys in the school, and such as were hated for their evil deeds. The very butterflies in the summer sun were named after the two nations, the red being called English, and the white French; and every little boy's heart burned with a desire to kill the latter. Yet, despite all this hostility to the Frenchman, the old Englishman thought the Gaul as alone worthy to be his foe, and meet him in fair fight on the field of battle. Victory over any other nation seemed hardly worth rejoicing for; but when the news of Nelson's victories spread through the land, there was no measure to the joy that filled the warrior-hearts of the dalesmen. Every eye was

wet with the patriot's tears of joy, and the English hero celebrated in many a song. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Cumberland statesman should have been slow to acquiesce in our alliance with France. He could never believe it; he said we would lose all our ancient bravery and skill in fight, and so fall a prey to some secondary power. Better things, we trust, are in store for us; and as the men of the old generation die out, so will all ancient prejudices fall away, and the bonds of union be drawn tighter between the two nations.

The old farmer will soon be dead; and there are, indeed, some signs that the whole race of these petty 'statesmen' is dwindling away. In almost every vale, one or more old families have become extinct, or the estate has been sold and passed into the hands of some wealthy man. Averse to change, it may be that they are not able to compete with the spirit of the times; or, perchance, in their decay they are only subject to that law of change which seems to rule all things earthly, and leave no estate, however fair and steadfast, for a long season unmolested. But whoever shall take the Cumberland farmer's place, and would be the equal of his predecessor, must needs be an honest and brave man, imbued with the spirit of a sturdy patriotism, full of kindly and gentle feelings for all his neighbours, a man averse to all shams and pretence, and worthy of the soil that sustains him.

A WORKING OPERA.

THREE minutes to eight o'clock, one Tuesday evening in this present year, and I find myself upon the great stage of the Italian Opera-house in Covent Garden. The piece upon which the curtain will rise in a few minutes is the well-known tragic opera of the *Huguenots*. Before the curtain is the white and gold, and blue and purple decorated area which contains the picked representatives of the refined society of the middle of the nineteenth century.

Behind the curtain, and around me, are the men and women who will, to the best of their ability, give a representation of the stern and rugged Paris society of the latter half of the sixteenth century. They are collected from many countries: sallow Italians, high-cheeked Frenchmen, stout Germans and Flemings, tall thin Poles, Tatar-looking Hungarians, and the smooth-faced natives of our own land. Some are chorus-singers; some merely supers, or men who having two legs, two arms, one head, and one body, let these physical advantages out for a small nightly rental, to be arrayed in any costume the stage-manager may direct, and the stage costume-maker provide—to hold any flag, gun, sword, staff, halberd, battle-axe, or goblet, that may be placed in their hands; and to be arranged in any position by the pantomimic director, upon bridges, in market-places, turret-windows, or princely halls; exhibiting in the mass every stage-expression, from stern unrelenting warlike fury, to easy conviviality. The super, if he does not bring to his labour a very high order of intelligence, has an almost military sense of duty; and I firmly believe that if directed to take up an attitude as one of the ornaments of the pediment, in the portico outside the stately building, he would do so, unflinchingly and mechanically, posing like an oriental fakeer, or an ancient column-stander, exposed to all the variations of a severe and fickle climate, until the curtain of death rang down upon him at his post.

The chorus-singer is not so manageable an individual; he will sing, but he will not act. If he is a fat Italian, it only makes matters worse; for the old native indolent spirit can never be overcome by all the Anglo-Saxon energy in the world. Ask Mr Harris, the best and most active of stage-managers,

who with all the tact and experience, all the industry and determination, all the polyglot denunciations at his disposal, finds it a most difficult and heart-breaking task to infuse some appearance of life into those masses that stand like a row of butts in a brewer's storehouse; musical, most musical, but at the same time most melancholy. The chorus-singer's most common notion of dramatic action is the throwing up of a single arm, as if hailing a cab in the public streets; his extraordinary notion is the throwing up of both arms, as if voting totally and energetically at a public meeting. Having exhausted these two very obvious, and not very elegant or elastic modes of pantomimic expression, he relapses into a state of profound, undisturbed physical quietude and self-possession. Out come his notes as melodiously and as correctly as the most exacting and fastidious conductor can desire. His voice is at the entire service of the management, but his attitudes never; and what little vitality is infused into such inert masses of vocalisation, is due to the introduction of mere pantomimic members of the chorus.

I pass on to the centre of the stage, and find it apparently a scene of hopeless entangled confusion. Machinists' labourers are rushing madly about, bearing what appear to be large solid blocks of architecture in their arms. Others are setting the elaborately painted walls and deep-windowed recesses of the mansion of the Count de Nevers, the scene that opens the opera. Tables are being arranged covered with fruit, flowers, golden vases, and drinking-goblets. Neat pages are walking listlessly about with wine-jugs in their hands; and the Catholic noblemen settle down one by one out of the surrounding confusion in their appointed places at the banquet, awaiting the rising of the wall of canvas that conceals them from their audience. Their legs form an unbounded field for observation, tightly cased as they are in the long coloured stockings of the period. There are red, blue, black, white, slate, green, pink, and scarlet legs of every variety of shape: some short and thick; some long and thin; some knotted like the trunks of oak-trees; some stiff and unbending; some springing and elastic; some a little—just a little—inclined inwards at the knees; some inclining in an equal degree outwards; some—the white ones—straight and equal all the way down, like altar candles; some like large parsnips, others—the red ones—like large carrots; some very pointed at the knees; some flat in the calves, as if their possessors had been too much in the habit of lying supinely upon their backs, with their faces turned upwards; others sharp in the shins—so sharp that it is a marvel how any stockings can be found sufficiently strong to resist the cutting powers of such members. The click of the prompt bell is heard, and the opening notes of the opera swell up from the finest orchestra in the world, muffled, however, to my ears by the folds of the intervening curtain. The old Huguenot chant merges into the opening chorus; the curtain rises, and the two halves of the great opera-house—the stage and the audience—are made acquainted with each other.

While the banquet, with all its attendant music, is going on, a hundred busy workmen are preparing the second scene, the château and grounds of Marguerite de Valois in Touraine. At the proper moment, when the first scene has closed, the walls of the Count de Nevers' mansion are torn asunder, as if by an earthquake, by the troop of men who swarm behind them, and are hurried into recesses—called scenery-docks—at the side; the tables, the goblets, the flowers, and the chairs are swept away at the same instant; and the turreted castle, the river, and the high, broad, solid flight of steps in the noble gardens of Chenonceaux, are displayed to the audience. The men with the curious legs crowd behind the scenes, or flow out

of the different entrances, their places upon the stage being now occupied by ladies in flowing muslin robes, the maids of honour to Marguerite de Valois. Melody follows upon melody; the plot thickens, under the struggling outbursts of the chorus, the warbling of the principal singers, and the surging sea of sound from the instrumentalists in the orchestra; the stage gradually fills with the people of the drama; the great roll of gray canvas comes slowly down, like a mountain mist; the distant music floats away, and the first act is over.

The illusion of the scene is destroyed at a blow. The palace and gardens of fair Touraine are no more; a hundred men in caps and shirt-sleeves are running about the stage, hustling the sombre Huguenots and the gay Catholics in the costume of the sixteenth century; bumping against the titled loungers in their gibbous hats, white neck-ties, and patent boots—carrying turrets, trees, parts of staircases, fragments of houses, and beds of flowers in mid-air, shouted at by the excited stage-manager, excited pantomimic director, excited machinist, excited scenic director. Bit by bit the chaos takes the form of something like order; two old solid inns are built up with pieces numbered and labelled like the parts of a church manufactured for exportation; a chapel is raised in the background; the Seine is filled in; the stage is grouped with all the characters that usually attend a continental Sunday fair; the curtain again rings up, and a picture of life in the *Pré-aux-Cleres* of old Paris is presented as a basis for the second act.

The stage, under the new mechanical arrangements, is in nearly all cases 'closed in'—that is to say, the old plan of wings, and 'flats' which slide on from each side, and join in the centre, is given up, and every scene is built up, as far as possible, in a solid form, the whole being shut in by side-pieces. The picture thus presented to the audience is with the performers enclosed in a semicircular form occupying about two-thirds of the available stage; and those who are before the foot-lights, with those who are behind the scenes, are left to enjoy their respective areas of comparative privacy undisturbed by each other.

It was while availing myself of this seclusion from the tragic interest of the story that was engrossing the large and fashionable audience in the front of the house, that I found a Huguenot soldier relieving his overcharged theological feelings in one of the passages, by throwing a modified back-somersault, technically known in the acrobat profession by the title of 'flip-flap.'

Outside the charmed circle, or semi-circle, of stage effect was the usual crowd of supers and chorus-singers, interspersed with a few persons like myself, and half-a-dozen policemen, backed by the clean new brick-walls of the building, and the dark staring windows—black from the intense light within the house—that look out upon the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. Within the charmed circle, aided by the highest order of scenic art; aided by some of the most dramatic music that was ever given by a composer to the opera stage; aided by two of the greatest vocal artists that ever breathed the breath of life into the melodies of this immortal work, is it to be wondered at, that, looking through the gauze-paned window of that room in the castle of the Count de Nevers in the well-known third act, I should, even from this point of view, be completely impressed with the illusion of the scene, feeling like one who, in the fatal month of August 1572, gazed upon the murky walls and heavy hangings of some Catholic noble's mansion; saw the hooded monks and nuns streaming in through the arched doors; heard the blood-thrilling blessing of the sacrificial swords; and saw the anointed

assassins slink stealthily out into the streets of old Paris to commence their fearful work. And when Raoul, in that passionate scene that follows the benediction, upon hearing the deep-toned bell of St Germain, rushes to the same window and throws it open, although he gazes in reality upon a blank wall, a few grimy stage-carpenters, a policeman, and a female dresser, waiting with a cloak for her mistress when she comes off after the present duet, who shall say when they look on that pale face, and in those two glaring, startled eyes, that he does not see all he professes to see—the bodies of his helpless friends shot and cloven down in the narrow streets, or floating by in the dark waters of the Seine, with their upturned faces covered with blood? And even when the final leap from the window is taken, into the midst of the motley group who await him, it is at least a minute before he shakes off the influence of the scene, and returns to the more mechanical business of the stage.

The fourth and final act is not hurried over or slurred, because, after the great spirit and interest of the third act, it presents something of an anti-climax. A richly tinted windowed chapel is built up, inside which the full tones of an organ are heard, and from which the variegated light streams upon an enclosed yard, where the final massacre takes place. Part of a cathedral is seen, and outside the yard is a Gothic shrine, beyond which are solid blocks of houses forming the opening to a long, narrow, winding street, at the end of which glisten the waters of the Seine, lighted up with the pale glimmer of coming day. At the side, some of the men with the curious legs are seen once more, stationed to fire the final volley that ends the opera. At a given signal, it is done—the startled female members of the company are deafened for a few seconds with the roar of musketry, the stage is partially filled with smoke; the last faint notes are gasped out, and the great curtain falls for that night upon the opera of the *Huguenots*.

As I pick my way towards the stage-door of the theatre, through the fourth ruin of the evening—the pulling-down and packing away of the final scene—I feel that the faces I have seen under pumpkin-shaped helmets, beef-eater cloth-caps, black wide-awakes, and puritan buff hats, will come across me at intervals for the next four months, sitting at cafés, standing at the corners of theatrical streets, and even meeting me in situations where it will be a long, sore, painful, but unavoidable tax upon the memory for me to recollect under what circumstances and in what places they have appeared to me before.

A HINT TO WEALTHY OLD PERSONS.

WEALTHY men with no near relations have a difficulty in knowing what to do with their money. Hence the many fantastic bequests of rich old fellows; bequests which, as everybody knows, get eaten up by lawyers, or are subjected to a process of gradual absorption by administrators and trustees. Not an uncommon idea has been that of leaving money to found hospitals for the boarding and educating of children; but this being pretty well overdone, and in some quarters not particularly popular, rich old men will now more than ever feel a difficulty in knowing what to do with their accumulations—a becoming punishment, some will say, for having selfishly 'laid up for themselves treasures on earth,' instead of spending their wealth with reasonable liberality on proper objects—helping forward every good work in their neighbourhood—while they yet had life and opportunity.

Some time ago, a wealthy gentleman at Poughkeepsie, state of New York, applied to us for

information respecting the working of hospitals for children in Great Britain; his object being to found somewhere in the United States an establishment for the board and education of 800 girls. All the information we could conveniently lay our hands on was duly forwarded, accompanied, however, with a strong remonstrance against the proposed institution: the notion of gathering together 800 young females under one roof being in itself among the wildest we had ever heard of—bad in every way, and, if carried out, likely to produce the most mischievous consequences. We have not heard distinctly whether the benevolent but short-sighted individual in question was so far staggered with our pretty freely expressed opinions as to forego his intention, or to substitute for it, according to our advice, establishments for the board and education of the deaf and dumb, and also for children of weak intellect, about the propriety of which there could be no dispute.

Glancing over an American newspaper—*New York Tribune*—we observe that a person in the position of the Poughkeepsie gentleman seeks for information as to how he should dispose of his great wealth. The following is his inquiry, signed a 'Constant Reader': 'An unmarried man, who has passed the meridian of life, who has gained his plum, and made provision for the attendants who have served him diligently through the summer of life, feels desirous of making the best use of the substance he may leave, and would ask as a special favour of the editors, in whom he has the utmost confidence, what disposition it is best to make of it.' The editor of the *Tribune*—Mr Horace Greeley, we presume—makes a reply, advising, first, the establishment of a universal register-office for persons in want of employment—a project which we think might be left to private enterprise; and second, the institution and endowment of a kind of university where a high-class education would be given for so much labour. This project, also, at least as regards England, does not seem very applicable, and we fall back on a third scheme, of which an account is given in a subsequent number of the same paper. This consists of a plan for reclaiming the destitute and dangerous classes of children who haunt New York and other large American cities. In Great Britain, as is well known, the mechanism of the Industrial or Ragged School is put in advantageous operation for this purpose. In the United States, the kindly disposed have gone a step further. Societies are formed to pick up poor and homeless children; and instead of immuring them in large establishments, they send them to the rural districts in the western states; there, the children are dispersed among the farmers, who educate and rear them as their own offspring—their only reward for doing so being the labour which the children are able to render till they reach maturity, and are able to rely on themselves. Reared in connection with the healthy influences of the family circle, and of occupation in the fields, the result is extremely satisfactory—there not being, as is said, more than two in a hundred of these youths who turn out badly.

This plan of reclamation is not new, but has never been gone into heartily in England. We feel assured, however, that there could be little difficulty at least in properly bestowing any assignable number of children among the rural population of the colonies. When in British America in 1853, we conversed with farmers who would have been happy to receive, educate, and keep poor children, for the sake prospectively of their labour. The question, then, is, why not try a scheme of juvenile reclamation of this nature? No doubt, there could be fifty objections raised against it; but theoretic obstacles must be overlooked in all great schemes of social melioration. There might be a difficulty as to funds. But this is

precisely what wealthy men of enlarged views could properly overcome. And if successful in his aim, how rich would be the reward of the philanthropist—the consciousness of having almost cut up crime by the roots, and imparted a new and sweeter tone to society!

But other advantageous methods of expending superfluous wealth could be pointed out. Passing over any consideration of the value of free libraries and reading-rooms in localities requiring these aids to social improvement—setting aside also the ordinary and well-recognised schemes in connection with hospitals for the sick and hurt, and for advancing religious knowledge—let us direct attention to plans, such as are in operation at Mettray, for reclaiming youthful criminals. Reformatories of this kind might with the most beneficial effect be endowed in Great Britain; and as to modes of management, we should only need to examine the working of what are called intermediate prisons in Ireland. These reformatories, as appears by a late parliamentary report, are simple rural establishments, movable from place to place, for cultivating and improving land, and to which prisoners are transmitted to acquire habits of industry and self-denial, and work out, as it may be said, a good character as independent labourers. The success of the arrangement emboldens us to suggest to parties with plenty means at their disposal, that movable rural establishments, adapted at once to reclaim wild lands and reclaim certain hopeful classes of offenders, are much wanted; and, excepting the plans already hinted at for disposing by emigration of destitute children, we know nothing of a simply beneficiary nature more worthy of being recommended to public notice.

W. C.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

HARRISON's process for making ice by means of a ten-horse machine has been exhibited at Red Lion Square, where all who were desirous of witnessing it—and they were not few during the hot weather—had the opportunity of seeing it in operation. The machine was constructed for use in Australia, where it will be a desirable acquisition, for the inventor describes it as 'applicable to the artificial reduction of the temperature of hospitals or dwelling-houses in tropical regions,' and also to cooling purposes generally, whether of liquids in large quantities, or of provisions required to be kept sweet in the warm weather. The present season assists the appreciation of such a machine; and if, as some think, we are only entering on a cycle of hot summers, ice will come more than ever into request.

Mr Mallet's monster mortar has been tried again at Woolwich, with a fifty-pound charge of powder; but as something always gives way after two or three rounds, no positive result has yet been achieved.—Better success attended the trial of Bray's 'traction engine' by the authorities of the artillery department: it took three siege-guns, weighing nearly twenty tons, and drew them four miles, partly up steep rough roads, with awkward turns, in one hour and a half. The engine is so contrived that it can alter its grasp to suit the work it has to do.

The Royal Academy Exhibition proved a triumph in a pecuniary as well as artistic sense, the total receipts at the doors having amounted to nine thousand pounds.—The Photographic Society are making experiments with Grubb's patent lens, to which it appears their art is likely to be much indebted. And in their report on the discovery of the collodion process by the late Mr F. Scott Archer, they call attention to 'a series of photographic drawings and plans executed

by the Royal Engineers in reduction of various Ordnance maps, at a saving estimated at L.30,000 to the country. The non-commissioned officers of this corps are now trained in the art, and sent to different foreign stations, so that in a few years there will be a net-work of photographic stations spread over the world, and having their results recorded in the war-department.'

The astronomer-royal's annual report to the Board of Visitors of the Greenwich Observatory—which, by the way, we omitted to mention last month through want of space—contains a few items of the sciences over which he presides, which are worth notice. One relates to the regulation of clocks by galvanic apparatus. Signals are received from four clocks in the General Post-office at intervals from twenty-six to thirty-six minutes past eleven in the forenoon; the required correction is made, and at the same minutes after twelve the four clocks return signals to notify their correction; and in turn they regulate a group of more than thirty dependent clocks. 'I believe,' says Mr Airy, 'that it is the best instance of mechanical regulation that exists.' He states, besides, that operations have been twice undertaken for determining the longitude of Edinburgh by telegraph. Owing to imperfections in the wires, the success was but partial. However, on one evening the same series of twenty-two stars was observed at the two observatories—Greenwich and Edinburgh—and the proper signals were sent along the wire. The difference of longitude, allowing for errors, is twelve minutes, forty-three seconds; and this result, we are told, is 'entirely due to the hearty aid rendered by the Electric Telegraph Company, not only by the appropriation to the undertaking of one of the long wires to Edinburgh, and by the loan of their instruments, but also by the cordial assistance of their officers, who, without interfering with the operations, gave their personal attention at both stations to render the apparatus efficient.'

The temporary failure of the great undertaking to lay the Atlantic telegraph-cable was felt as a national disappointment. All especially who read the interesting account of the *Agamemnon's* hazardous voyage, regretted that so grand an effort should not have been crowned with success. Since then, as everybody knows, the desired consummation has taken place; but for all that, the lessons suggested by the misfortune should not be forgotten. Of course the failure brought out a host of criticisms and suggestions, as well as censures. The cable was too light, or too heavy, or too brittle, or badly twisted; and not a few schemers came forward with plans for the sinking. Among these, there is one for buoying out a given length of cable, and then by a systematic exhaustion of the buoys, to allow the length to find its way to the bottom without strain. Another, proposed by Mr J. Maclean of Edinburgh, provides a compensation, which, preventing a great or sudden strain, pays out the cable at a safe and easily controllable rate. The compensation is produced by an addition to the system of pulleys now used on board the two great steam-ships, consisting of two pulleys elevated some twenty feet above the others, and attached to a piston-rod, which, bearing on springs, rises or falls according to the pressure. The cable would thus pass over and under five pulleys, and with the advantage that any slackable quantity could always be had in readiness, and that 'the strain could never, under ordinary circumstances, exceed 3000 pounds, which is only one-half of the strain caused by the pitching of the vessel during the late experiments in the Bay of Biscay.' Mr Maclean's plan includes details to meet contingencies; but we cannot do more than give this general notion of his contrivance for sinking electric-cables.

The Red Sea telegraph is now likely to be realised, as government have promised a guarantee. Besides this assistance, its chances as a commercial speculation are thought to be bettered by the fact that a Suez canal is impossible. Mr Robert Stephenson, in a masterly review of the whole subject, shews, in the *Times*, why it is impossible, and concludes thus: 'I will no longer permit it to be said that, by abstaining from expressing myself fully on the subject, I am tacitly allowing capitalists to throw away their money on what my knowledge assures me to be an unwise and unremunerative speculation.'

The Institute of British Architects, at one of their late meetings, discussed a paper by Mr George Morgan—'On Public Competition for Architectural Designs'—in which, while admitting that competition could not well be avoided, it was shewn that architects labour under disadvantages as compared with other professions, inasmuch as in the preparation of plans, they must undertake journeys, and incur an amount of trouble and expense, all at their own risk. Last year, 1857, was considered a slack building-year in the metropolis; and yet advertisements were issued, inviting sixty-nine public competitions for works and buildings representing a value of £300,000; and in preparing the plans for all these, there was an outlay of £30,000. Hence it seemed desirable that some way of saving architects from so much trouble and loss should be devised. Mr Kerr made some observations in the course of the discussion, which will bear repetition. 'Competition in the nineteenth century,' he said, 'was really a very childish thing in its results, and might be illustrated by putting a childish case. Suppose A, a little boy at school, had a capital of sixpence, which he proposed to invest in buns. He caused it to be intimated to B, C, D, and all the other boys, that they might send in samples in the form of one bun each; and having received them, he proceeded to adjudicate by eating them all up; and having come to a conclusion as to which was the best, he invested his sixpence with the successful competitor. Each competitor, not knowing much of arithmetic, reasoned thus: If I get the order, I shall make a profit on the whole, though I shall lose what I have sent in; but that is only the loss of the material. This result, however, is only arrived at by an expense to all the others.' Thus the question stands; we shall be glad by giving it publicity to aid towards a solution.

While, as described in a recent *Month*, Rangoon tar is coming largely into use in the industrial and chemical arts, we are reminded not to forget the pitch of Trinidad, which is as remarkable in its way as the Burmese product. Information concerning the bitumen and petroleum of that island has recently been published from memoranda made by the Earl of Dundonald, who it appears has bought the estates in which the Pitch Lake is situate, with leave to lay down railways, and establish a trade. Already this pitch is made use of in this country under the name of Anti-oxide Paint, for the bottoms of ships, for metal pipes, roofs, and the like; but its applications are many. It is a good material for sea-walls, piers, break-waters, and other marine constructions requiring strength and durability, for it seems to defy alike the sun and the waves. Ages ago, the Pitch Lake overflowed, and forced a channel two thousand yards in length to the beach, and advanced thence five hundred yards into the sea, carrying imbedded within it all the loose materials and rubbish gathered on the way. These materials still remain imbedded; the pitch has neither yielded nor cracked, and there it rests a natural break-water against the heavy swell raised by the constant breezes of the tropics. Art, it is said, can imitate nature: the melted pitch might be mixed with other materials, and sunk to the bottom of a harbour or

river; old lighters or hulks might be filled with it and sunk, for when cold, it becomes hard as can be desired. Chalk, or friable stone coated with it, becomes hard as granite. Loose shingle might be concreted with it, and kept from drifting; foundations might be formed for light-houses and the piers of bridges; and owing to the soft state in which it could be applied, the pitch appears to be one of the best things yet discovered for repairing under-water foundations. It can be cast into water-pipes more durable than iron, and at less expense, and without risk of imparting any offensive taste to the water; for the pools in the Pitch Lake are as well known for their freedom from pitchy flavour as for their limpidity. When it was proposed to supply Port of Spain with water by cast-iron pipes at a cost of £14,000, another proposition was made to try the pitch, which was adopted. Pipes were cast and laid along the hills, and the town was supplied with water at an outlay of only £4000. This success has led some of the planters in Jamaica to recommend that the beds of their mountain-torrents, which are very porous, should be coated with a layer of the pitch to prevent the loss of water which now takes place by rapid infiltration before the torrent reaches the low grounds. Again, the pitch makes a good japan, smooth and glossy; it keeps the worm out of timber, and iron from rust, and prevents the entrance of damp into the walls of basements. In the United States it is much used for underground stores; it is said to answer even better than gutta-percha as a coating for telegraph-wires; and mixed with saw-dust or small chips of wood, it is an energetic fuel. And in addition to all this, as the petroleum springs are still active, there is no lack of material from which the chemist may extract oils and other useful products.

Mr George Rennie has brought a question allied to this of the pitch before the Institution of Civil Engineers, in a paper, entitled 'On the Employment of Rubble Béton, or Concrete, in Works of Engineering and Architecture.' He shews how largely this material was used by the Romans, not only for foundations, but for large domes and arches; and how the use of it has of late years been revived in France and in this country. The cement-works at Vassy now produce cement to the value of £32,000 a year. The bridges at Paris have been repaired with it, and, in the case of the Pont de l'Alma and the Pont des Invalides, built entirely of rubble and Vassy cement. The first mentioned was constructed in the short space of nine months; it has three elliptical arches, of which the centre is 141 feet, the other two 126 feet each, and, except the facing of cut-stone, all is rubble and cement. Thus, these large arches may be said to have been cast; as yet, however, they appear to be as strong as those built throughout of cut-stone. The saving of time is great, for the same bridge would have taken three years to build in the usual way. But how far this rubble béton can be relied on is, as Mr Rennie observes, 'a question for futurity to determine.' The French government have used it in the public works at Cherbourg, Marseille, and Algiers; but to stand the shocks of the sea, the blocks must have a bulk of from ten to sixteen square yards, weighing about fifty tons.

One of the earliest revivals of the use of rubble in England was in the foundations of the penitentiary at Milbank in 1813. At Liverpool, some of the dock and river walls are built of rubble, the cost of which is from ten to fifteen shillings a cubic yard less than stone. The Chelsea Water Company used it in the construction of their river-wall 1200 feet along the Thames at Kingston. The piers or break-waters of the harbour of refuge at Dover are built of it, formed into blocks of from six to ten tons' weight, and sunk in sixty-two feet of water; the height of the mass,

when finished, will be eighty-seven feet. The harbour at Alderney, where the depth of water is greater than at Dover, is also built of it; but as regards the British constructions, it must be understood that the concrete is most commonly formed of Portland cement, with the necessary admixture of shingle and sand. Mr Rennie's main object in bringing the subject before the Civil Engineers, was to shew that concrete may be much more used in engineering works than it is at present; but as yet the comparative cost of concrete and of squared stone has not been satisfactorily made out.

M. Kuhlmann, whose researches we have heretofore noticed, has made further progress in the production of hydraulic cements. The object is to combine certain silicates in such proportions with mortar as shall make it resist the action of water, especially of sea-water. Alumina or magnesia kneaded into a paste with a solution of potash or soda, forms a compound which resembles natural felspar or talcose slate, and becomes hard and semi-transparent. Add slaked lime, and a hydraulic cement is produced; and if the magnesia is properly proportioned, the cement gets harder the longer it is exposed to sea-water. From all this it appears that architects and engineers will henceforth have a multiplicity of resources for the construction of foundations and works in ports and harbours.

There is yet another substance by which damp and water are set at defiance—that is, Water Glass, or Oil of Flint, as it is sometimes called. It is a preservative against fire; a good glaze, cement, stiffener, &c., a varnish for metal pipes, rendering them as clean and smooth as glass, no unimportant consideration in water-supply; and for metal surfaces anywhere, for the hulls of ships, and many other purposes. A Water Glass Company has been formed to give full effect to the invention.

Another interesting article is the wood printed and embossed by a process invented by Mr Taylor of Nottingham. He produces table-tops which, though but one kind of wood only, have all the effect of marquetry, so perfect are the impression and variety of colour. The embossed woods, chiefly chestnut and lime, are scarcely thicker than drawing-paper; and the designs are brought up sharp and clear, so that when glued on to walls, or mouldings, or panels, or furniture, they appear as cleanly finished carvings—and at but small cost.

And wood claims attention in another form—that of portable Swiss chalets, constructed by machinery, so as to be erected in any spot in three or four days. Capital things for folk who want a temporary residence, while trying whether a locality will suit them or not: they may now carry their house with them from place to place. A sportsman bound for the moors may have a picturesque shooting-lodge set up for his sojourn, or an angler a fishing-lodge, or boat-house, fashioned to suit the landscape. And now that wood can be rendered all but imperishable and fire-proof, wooden chalets may be occupied with safety.

MY POSSESSIONS.

['TEN years ago, I could scarcely write a half-dozen lines correctly; and six years since, I wore a canvas smock, and worked hard, physically hard, as a porter in Billingsgate market.' 'This is the avowal of the author of a volume of poems now before us.* But the portership was a promotion to him, who commenced the work of life as a charity school-boy. At

fourteen, he went into a solicitor's office, to drudge at rough copying from morning till night for five shillings a week; then he sat all alone upon the floor of a pawnbroker's warehouse, for still longer hours, reading novels and rummaging out pledges; then, although wages were due to him, he ran off one fine day, with a solitary half-crown in his pocket, to live for the rest of his life in the merrie green-wood, but came back when he reflected that his mother would be inconsolable at his disappearance; then he inhaled the dust of a furrier's warehouse, and then of a cony-cutter's, till his poor wages and sinking health induced his father to send him to work among the salmon at Billingsgate. This was the turn of his fortune: our hero, at thirty years of age, has now a standing in the market of his own, his business finishes at ten in the morning, he has a cottage, a garden, a wife and children, he entertains literary society not quite confined to his own rank, and he shakes hands with Leigh Hunt! Verse-making, Mr Watts tells us, mentally and morally speaking, has enriched him considerably; it has made him happier in every sense; it has elevated his nature, and gained him the sympathy and friendship of those who are distinguished by more than wealth. The contents of this volume will have a corresponding effect upon others. It is full of a vigorous, wholesome, and inspiring spirit; as will be felt by all who read the piece we quote, although others might be selected that are far more poetical.]

MY POSSESSIONS.

I am not rich in worldly goods,
Yet rank among the really blest;
I've sturdy limbs, a hopeful heart,
By friendship true my hand is pressed.
Contentment cheers my lowly hearth,
Health mantles on my glowing cheek,
Hope lights my way from day to day,
And joys are mine no words may speak.

Loved arms entwine about my neck,
Arms of a wife and wee ones four;
A fifth in heaven now wears a crown
Of quenchless light: Say, am I poor?
Poor! poor! Ah, no, but rich indeed,
Rich in the smiles of those I love;
Rich in my health, content, and hope;
Wealth that God only can remove.

Though bloated luxury preside
At lordly feast in lordly hall,
Where streaming wine-cups sparkling stand,
The soul to cheat by foul enthal;
Where gems blaze bright, with magic light,
From queenly brow and heaving breast;
Where beauty smiles and weaves her wiles,
And flatt'ring lips are most caressed.

My rustic board affords more joy,
More true delight than they may know,
When wife and youngsters press around,
With eyes afire and cheeks aglow:
The cares and troubles of the world
Without are all forgotten then;
I share with them my simple meal,
And reign the happiest of men.

* *Clara, the Gold-seeker, the Elf in Reel, and Other Poems.* By John George Watts, author of *Lyrics of Progress*, &c. London: Groombridge. 1883.

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